

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/824,621
Response to the Advisory Action mailed on February 6, 2006

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action mailed on November 22, 2005 and the Advisory Action mailed on February 6, 2006. Claims 1-16 and 32-36 are pending in the patent application. Claims 11-16 were previously withdrawn. Claims 1 and 32 have been amended. Claim 9 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) has been submitted with this response. No new matter has been added by this response.

Claims 1-10 and 32-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,642,483 to Luciano et al. ("*Luciano*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,093,861 to Graham ("*Graham*"). Applicants disagree with and traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms where each lock mechanism is associated with one of the plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine. Each lock mechanism is physically movable between unlocked and locked conditions with respect to its associated area. The apparatus includes control circuitry which is independent of the gaming machine that includes a processor operating under control of a stored program. The control circuitry is coupled to each of the lock mechanisms via a communications link for controlling the operation of the lock mechanisms. The apparatus includes a data storage and retrieval system adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing data including personal identification data and access authorization data indicative of the areas, if any of the machine for which a person seeking access to the machine is

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authorized. The apparatus also includes a data input device connected to the gaming machine which is coupled to the processor for input at least personal identification data identifying a person seeking access to an area of the machine. The processor is responsive to input personnel identification data for operating one or more lock mechanisms in accordance with access authorization corresponding to an unidentified person. The storage media storing personnel identification data that authorizes access by certain identified personnel to some but not all of the plurality of physical areas. The processor causes the lock mechanisms of the physical areas to which access is authorized to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those physical areas. Applicants submit that the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 1.

In the Final Office Action, the Patent Office states that *Luciano* teaches a plurality of electrically operable locks associated with areas of gaming machines. However, *Luciano* does not teach or suggest how the locks operate and, therefore, the Patent Office relies on *Graham*. *Graham* is directed to a method of authenticating input data including user data and pin code data for an access control system. In the Advisory Action, the Patent Office states that "[c]learly, if *Graham* can open one lock, one of ordinary skill in the art can figure out how to use *Graham* to open two locks without undue experimentation." (See the Advisory Action, page 2). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Graham discloses an access control system 50 which includes a strike control relay 51 responsive to control signals from a microprocessor 45 to control the opening and closing of an access device, such as a lock or a striker. *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest that such a control system can be employed to open or close multiple

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access devices or locks. Furthermore, *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest how such a system could be utilized to control more than one access device or lock. Controlling the opening and closing of a plurality of locks is not obvious in view of *Graham* where *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest such a system or utilizing its system in this way.

Moreover, the claimed invention is directed to an apparatus which remotely, selectively controls access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine. Specifically, the apparatus includes control circuitry having a processor which is independent of the gaming machine and which remotely controls the operation of the locks to allow an authorized person access to certain physical areas of the gaming machine. Neither *Luciano* nor *Graham* disclose, teach or suggest a control system or a processor which is remotely located from or independent of the gaming machine and which controls the operation of access devices such as locks associated with the gaming machine or gaming machines. In *Luciano*, the locks are mechanical locks which are physically manipulated by a user having authorized access to the physical areas of the gaming machine. In an alternative embodiment, *Luciano* discloses that electronic locks having a code could be used. However, the electronic locks disclosed by *Luciano* would still have to be individually and independently manipulated by an authorized person to open each lock.

Graham discloses a microcontroller or microprocessor 45 which controls the opening and closing of an access device such as an electric lock or door striker. The microcontroller 45 is coupled to input devices such as a keyboard 46 or an optional card reader 47 to control the strike control relay 51 which is also coupled to the microcontroller. As shown in Fig. 3, the system is directed to systems such as access

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keypads positioned adjacent to a security door to gain access to that security door. *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest that the microcontroller 45 is independent of the system or located at a remote location. Additionally, *Graham* discloses that its system is used to control a single electric lock or access device. There is absolutely nothing in *Graham* which describes operating a plurality of locks. Furthermore, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not utilize the microcontroller of *Graham* to remotely control a lock or striker of a door when such a configuration would be costly and burdensome.

For at least these reasons, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham*, does not disclose, teach or suggest an apparatus for remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine including a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms which are unlocked by a processor that is independent of the gaming machine to allow access to the physical areas of the gaming machine by an authorized person. Accordingly, amended claim 1 and claims 2-8 and 10, which depend from claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is directed to a method of remotely, selectively controlling access to a plurality of different physical areas of a gaming machine. Claim 32 includes similar elements to amended claim 1. Therefore, for the same reasons provided above for amended claim 1, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 32. Therefore, claim 32 and claims 33-36, which depend from claim 32, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

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In light of the above, Applicants submit that claims 1-8, 10 and 32-36 are patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants request that claims 1-8, 10 and 32-36 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 19-1351 to cover the fee of \$790.00 for the RCE. A check in the amount of \$120 was previously submitted to cover the fee for the one-month extension of time. If any other fees are due in connection with this application, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (25814-403120) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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Certificate of Transmission

I hereby certify that on April 13, 2006 this document is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (fax #-571-273-8300).


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